

SPOTLIGHT ON : NOTRE DAME MISSION VOLUNTEERS/AMERICORPS

Serving in a time of crisis

A great part of attending the Mid-Year Training for Notre Dame Mission Volunteers/AmeriCorps was the opportunity to meet current Members.

In the March issue of this eNewsletter, I asked you to stay tuned for upcoming stories about NDMVA Members. This issue features three members: Sal Rosas, Martha Kamara and Chris Clark. I enjoyed meeting them at Mid-Year and following up with them when they returned to their sites. Here are their service stories:

"It has been remarkable to see how well our Members and Site Directors have risen to the challenge of this pandemic. They have found new ways to continue their existing service and have also responded to emerging needs that are surfacing during this crisis."

Adrienne Andrews, Executive Director -Notre Dame Mission Volunteers/AmeriCorps



Sal Rosas
Serving in Apopka, Florida

Salvador Rosas, Jr. grew up in the Orlando area where he began elementary school as an ESL student. According to Sal, he was quiet in elementary school, but that changed when he joined Hope CommUnity Center as a high school student.

"When I joined Hope CommUnity Center, I met people my own age as well as mentors. This experience helped instill confidence and helped me grow as a student and as a person," Sal said.

After graduating from high school and starting college, Sal became a Notre Dame Mission Volunteer/AmeriCorps Member in Apopka where he serves as an elementary school ESL instructor – an experience he has loved.

"Now we have to adapt to the pandemic," Sal says. "I know that many students are feeling discouraged by not being in school with their friends and teachers. I have written over one hundred letters of encouragement personalized to each student. I hope these letters help them understand that they can get through this and come out strong."

Next year, Sal will be a second year NDMVA Member at Hope CommUnity Center. Eventually, Sal hopes to get an MBA and go into business but always with an eye on service and giving back to his community.



Martha Kamara
Serving in Lakeland, Florida

Martha Kamara grew up in Clearwater, Florida. In her junior year of high school, Martha had the opportunity to enroll in an Early College Program. By eighteen,

she completed two years of college before transferring to a university where she majored in International Affairs.

"I was aware of the priceless opportunities that I was afforded in high school. Before beginning graduate school, I wanted to give back and help other students with their educational experience.

Serving as an instructor for fifth and sixth grade students in a brand-new school has been a challenging experience. However, it has been very rewarding to work with students in this age group. You have to be on top of things and be willing to understand their learning and social needs. The feedback you receive is immediate."

Shortly after the pandemic restrictions were announced, Martha and her colleagues switched to online learning. "It took getting used to, but we've found our rhythm of consistency with adjustability," she said."

Martha will enter graduate school to continue her studies in International Affairs in the fall of 2020.



Christopher Clark
Serving in Boulder, Colorado

Christopher Clark speaks with enthusiasm about his service with Notre Dame Mission Volunteer/AmeriCorps in Boulder as part of the "I Have A

Dream" Foundation. Chris helps high school seniors with academics, college and career preparation and enrichment programs.

Chris grew up in Texas, graduated from the University of Colorado with a degree in mathematics and philosophy and then served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mozambique. "I wanted to learn about other cultures and serving in the Peace Corps, was a wonderful experience. As I spent time in Africa, I realized that I would like to learn more about people and culture in my country. I returned to Colorado and joined NDMVA as a way to do that.

"With the onset of this pandemic, we went from being at school to not being at school very quickly", Chris said. "There was little time to prepare. We did manage to get an online program going. We are connecting with the students and helping the seniors address issues related to next steps and the future."

After this year of service Chris will enter a graduate program in math and science with the goal of a career in public health.

Meg Glendon

Thanks to Sal, Martha and Chris for taking the time to share their stories. We wish them well as they take the next steps in their lives.

Service in NDMV/A can be a remarkable experience. If you know someone you think would be interested in serving with Notre Dame Mission Volunteers/AmeriCorps, please share this web address with them: www.ndmva.org